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Administrative Office of the Courts
County and Municipal Probation Advisory Council

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Shevondah M. Fields
Staff Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Council Members

FROM: Shevondah M. Fields
Staff Director

RE: Best Practice

DATE: November 20, 2014

Below you will find a list of “Best Practices” notated on probation providers’ compliance review reports. The first ten are the most commonly used. To provide clarity a definition of “Best Practice” is always included on the coversheet of each report. Best Practice is defined as:

Best Practice: *No clear council rule or GA statute violated; however, it is a practice that is being used in community corrections that may reduce the risk of liability and/or increase the opportunity for successful outcomes.*

1. Consider developing formal procedures for case management and oversight. This helps ensure a consistent quality of service for each probationer and generally decreases liability.
2. Accurately document the conditions ordered by the Judge on the sentence form.
3. Avoid asserting absolute authority in regards to issuing a warrant. The Judge maintains authority in issuing warrants.
4. Consider changing the priority of fees as “frontloading” of probation fees may result in probationers overpaying or paying for services not yet rendered.
5. Develop a consistent standard of all operating policies and procedures.
6. Allow the judge to complete the warrant issue date upon his/her signature. Avoid pre-printing issue dates on the warrants.
7. Avoid tolling cases near the probation end date, to limit the possibility of erroneous arrests.
8. Consider adopting a formal, written waiver to be used when the

probationer is given less than 72-hours' notice of a revocation hearing.

9. Monitor caseload levels in consultation with the court and/or city.
10. Case Documentation– Document discussion with probationers regarding the conditions of probation, including “stay-away” and “no-alcohol” orders. Generally, it is considered best practice to note each special condition, each month, for each probationer.
11. Maintain copies of signed warrants and orders within all probation files.
12. Obtain written court orders for any local practices (such as community service credits) which may differ significantly from standard operating procedures.
13. Refrain from including future probation fees within the total bond amount as future fees are not owed.
14. Close all cases promptly to ensure accurate case numbers and promote precise records.
15. Refrain from including social security numbers on any orders filed with the clerk to ensure confidentiality and minimize liability.
16. Include all relevant case facts within the warrant affidavit to provide clarity as to why a warrant is being issued.
17. Provide defendants with specific next report dates after failures to report, prior to preparing a warrant. This ensures that the defendant is aware of the date they are expected to report.
18. Ensure tolling affidavits include the date the court enters the order to avoid confusion.
19. The Director or Probation Supervisor may consider reviewing court documents before submitting to the court to ensure accuracy and quality control.
20. Ensure drug testing procedures are outlined in policy.
21. Provide probationers with a list of all state approved DUI schools and clinical evaluators within the area as well as the link to the DDS and DBHDD websites.
22. Utilize a tolling affidavit or non-est when tolling a case. It is unnecessary to complete both the affidavit and the non-est.